

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SICILIAN SOCIALISTS

ELECTORAL STRATEGY

1. PROMINENT SOCIALIST LEADERS ARE NOW PREDICTING THAT THE DC WILL LOSE VERY LITTLE IN THE NEXT REGIONAL BALLOTTING OF JUNE 1976. THEY EXPECT THAT THE DC WILL LOSE A LOT ON ITS LEFT SIDE, BUT THAT THESE LOSSES ARE LIKELY TO BE BALANCED OUT BY GAINS SCORED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE MSI-DN. THE GREAT PUZZLE OF THE MOMENT IS WHETHER THE COMMUNISTS OR THE SOCIALISTS WILL BE THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE DC LEFTIST LOSSES. THE PSI HOPES THAT A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN PSI VOTING STRENGTH WILL PREVENT A DC-PCI MATRIMONY, WHICH ALL SOCIALIST LEADERS HERE BELIEVE WOULD BE A DISASTER FOR THE PSI, THE OTHER SMALL PARTIES AND THE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS THEMSELVES.

2. NOWHERE BETTER THAN IN SICILY ARE THE POLLS SHOWING THAT THE PSI IS PICKING UP MOMENTUM WHILE THE DC IS SLOWLY LOSING GROUND. THE SOCIALISTS WERE THE MAIN VOTE-GETTERS IN SICILY ON JUNE 15, 1975. THE SICILIAN PSI ATTRIBUTED THIS MAINLY TO THE COLLABORATION IN THE RECENT PAST BETWEEN THE REGION'S CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT COALITION AND THE COMMUNISTS. THE PSI THEREFORE HAS REASON TO FEEL THAT ITS ELECTORAL SUCCESS RUNS PARALLEL TO MORE PCI "RESPONSIBILITY" IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF THE REGION. ANOTHER PSI STRATEGY FOR GAINING STRENGTH HAS BEEN THE SPONSORSHIP

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OF LARGE APPROPRIATIONS TO MIDDLE CLASS SECTORS (MERCHANTS, ARTISANS,

FARMERS AND THOSE IN THE TOURIST TRADE).

THE CENTER LEFT

3. SOCIALISTS HAVE ALREADY DECREED THE CENTER LEFT FORMULA DEFUNCT IN SICILY. AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL, THEY SUCCESSFULLY SPONSORED A LEGISLATIVE PACT WHICH COMMITS THE DC, PSI, PSDI, PRI AND THE COMMUNISTS TO DRAFTING AND PASSING LEGISLATION TOGETHER AT THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY. IN THE CITY OF PALERMO, THEY HAVE ALREADY FORCED THE DC MAYOR GIACOMO MARCHELLO'S DC-PSDI-PRI GIUNTA TO RESIGN, AND ARE VIGOROUSLY PUSHING FOR A NEW COMMUNAL GIUNTA OPEN TO PCI VOTING CONTRIBUTIONS. ON DECEMBER 8, A SOCIALIST WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF A NEW PCI-PSI-PSDI-PRI PROVINCIAL GIUNTA AT AGRIGENTO. THIS IS THE FIRST GIUNTA WITH DIRECT COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION TO BE ELECTED IN SICILIAN PROVINCES OR CAPITAL CITIES AFTER THE JUNE 15 ELECTION. IT IS ALSO THE FIRST TIME THE DC HAS BEEN IN OPPOSITION IN A SICILIAN PROVINCIAL CAPITAL.

4. IN SICILY, THE DEMARTINIANI, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT GARPARE SALADINO AND FORMER PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER LAURICELLA, ARE THE LAW-MAKERS OF THE PARTY. THE DISSENTING MANCINI OR LOMBARDIANI AMOUNT TO ALMOST NOTHING AT THE PRESENT MOMENT. HOWEVER, THERE IS UNANIMOUS OPINION IN THE PSI THAT THE COMMUNISTS BE BROUGHT INTO THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT COALITION AFTER THE JUNE 1976 ELECTION.

COMMENT:

5. SO FAR THE PSI HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL IN SECOND-GUESSING THE TACTICS WHICH LAY BEHIND AN APPARENT PCI PRUDERY, AND HAS GONE OUT OF ITS WAY TO PROPOSE UNDER THE PSI LABEL WHAT ARE LATENT COMMUNIST DESIRES. THE UPCOMING REGIONAL ELECTION WILL DEMONSTRATE WHETHER SUCH AN ATTITUDE PAYS BACK.

6. ALTHOUGH THE ELECTORAL PLATFORM OF THE PSI WILL DEPEND MUCH ON THE RESULTS OF THE FORTHCOMING NATIONAL PARTY CONGRESS IN ROME, IT IS ALREADY CLEAR THAT THE SICILIAN SOCIALISTS--WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO BRINGING DOWN THE WALL SEPARATING THE CENTER LEFT FROM THE PCI--WILL DO THERE BEST TO INSTALL THE COMMUNISTS IN THE SICILIAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT. DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT.
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